

2007 Fact Sheet

Teens at Work Project Occupational Health Surveillance Program Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Non-Fatal Work-Related Injuries to Massachusetts Teens, 2000-2004 GROCERY STORES

The findings presented in this fact sheet cover only non-fatal injuries to Massachusetts teens working in grocery stores (i.e., supermarkets and other grocery and convenience stores). These injuries were identified by the *Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project (TAW)* during the calendar years 2000-2004 using data from workers' compensation claims (WC) and hospital emergency departments (ED). See our publication "Non-Fatal Work-Related Injuries to Massachusetts Teens, 2000-2004, An Overview" for a detailed description of the project. Our overview and industry-specific fact sheets are all available on the TAW website: www.mass.gov/dph/teensatwork.

Overview

Next to restaurants and other eating establishments, grocery stores are the second most common workplace in which Massachusetts teens are employed. Nearly 12% (7,339) of all employed 16- and 17-year-olds in the state worked in this industry in 2003¹. Grocery stores are also second only to restaurants in terms of the number of teens injured at work. Approximately 13% (274) of the 2,119 work-related injuries to teens (for which industry was known) identified by the TAW project between 2000-2004 happened in this industry. Nearly 72% (196) of these injuries were identified through workers' compensation data. Following are the highlights of our most recent findings on work-related injuries to teens working in Massachusetts grocery stores.

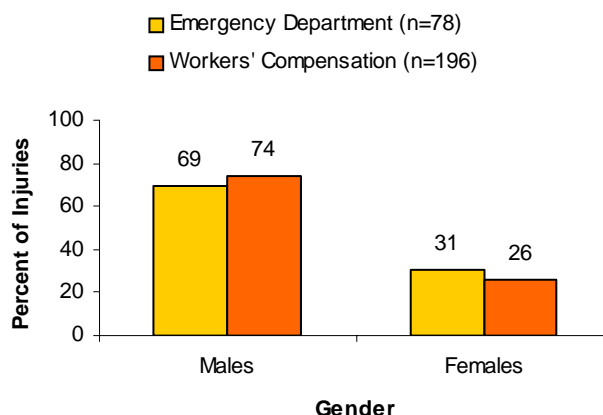
Injuries by Gender

Among young workers in grocery stores, males sustained more injuries than females (Figure 1). Males appeared more in the WC data than the ED data, while the opposite was true for females.

Injuries by Age Group

The majority of injuries in both data sets occurred in older teens aged 16- and 17-years-old (Figure 2).

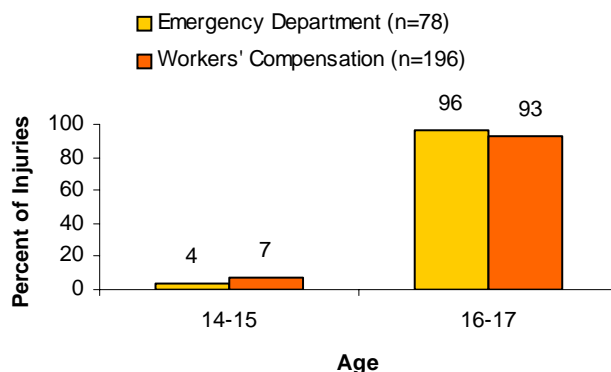
Figure 1. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Gender and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004



Note: Of the 274 injuries identified in this time period, there were 4 WC cases for which gender was missing. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

Figure 2. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Age Group and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004



Note: Of the 274 injuries identified in this time period, there was 1 WC case sustained by a teen under age 14. This case was not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2000-2004). Current Population Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Injuries by Type

Within the ED data, “cuts, lacerations, and punctures” were by far the most common injury types identified among teens working in grocery stores (Figure 3). Far behind this category were “bruises, contusions, and crushings,” and “sprains, strains, and tears.” “Sprains, strains, and tears” were the most common injury types found in the WC data. Following second were “cuts, lacerations, and punctures.”

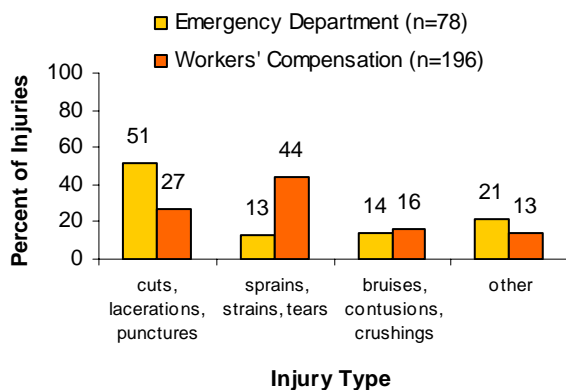
Injury Type by Gender

Injury types differed by gender (Figure 4). The most common type among males working in grocery stores was “cuts, lacerations, and punctures.” The most common injury type among females working in grocery stores was “sprains, strains, and tears.”

Injury Type by Age Group

Figure 5 shows the distribution of injuries by age group, yet because the numbers are so small among the 14- and 15-year-old group, it is impossible to make valid comparisons between the two groups. The 16- and 17-year-olds sustained “cuts, lacerations, and punctures,” and “sprains, strains, and tears” almost equally while working in grocery stores.

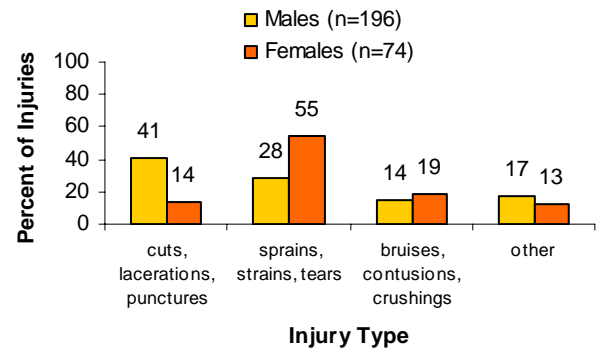
Figure 3. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Injury Type and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004



Note: Of the 274 injuries identified in this time period, there were 33 cases (8 from ED and 25 from WC) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

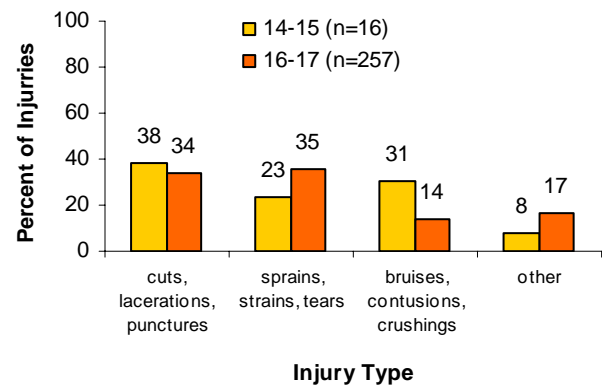
Figure 4. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Injury Type and Gender, Massachusetts, 2000-2004



Note: Of the 270 injuries identified in this time period for which gender was known, there were 30 cases (20 males and 10 females) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

Figure 5. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Injury Type and Age Group, Massachusetts, 2000-2004



Note: Of the 274 injuries identified in this time period for which age at time of injury was greater than 14, there were 33 cases (3 from 14-15 year-olds and 30 from 16-17 year-olds) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

I was trying to move a giant rack of muffins which weighs about 280 pounds—it's on wheels. A wheel was stuck and the whole thing fell backwards onto me, pinning me. Customers had to pull it off of me. A supervisor gave me some ice for my shoulder and took me home.

~ 17-year-old grocery store bakery clerk

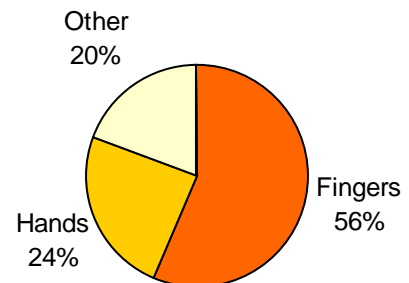
Cuts, Lacerations, and Punctures by Body Part Affected

The majority of “cuts, lacerations, and punctures” sustained by teens working in grocery stores were to the fingers (Figure 6). The hands were the second most common body part affected by these types of injuries. Of the 82 “cuts, lacerations and punctures,” information about the source of injury was available for 42 (51%). The majority (74%) were caused by a knife or other cutting hand tool.

Sprains, Strains, and Tears by Body Part Affected

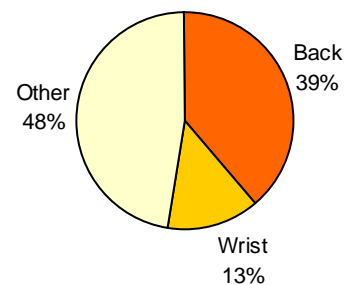
Thirty-nine percent of “sprains, strains, and tears” sustained by teens working in grocery stores involved the back (Figure 7). The wrist was the second most common specific body part affected by these types of injuries. Of the 84 “sprains, strains, and tears,” information about the manner in which the injury was inflicted was available for 61 (73%). Sixty-one percent of the “sprains, strains, and tears” were caused by overexertion; lifting accounted for 36%, while pushing/pulling was an additional 18% of the “sprains, strains, and tears.”

Figure 6. Work-Related Cuts, Lacerations, and Punctures to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Body Part Affected, Massachusetts, 2000-2004 (n=82)



Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

Figure 7. Work-related Sprains, Strains, and Tears to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Body Part Affected, Massachusetts, 2000-2004 (n=84)



Note: Of the 84 “sprains, strains, and tears” identified in this time period, there were 2 for which body part affected was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

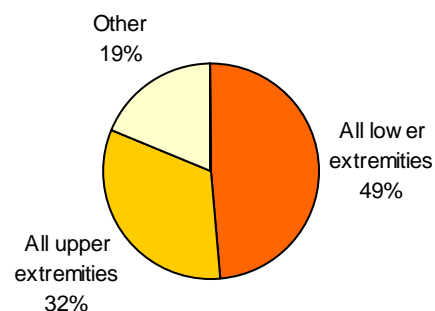
I was gathering carts in the parking lot, as many as I could push at once. I rounded a bend to maneuver them into their corral when I threw out my back. I told my boss but she had me keep working my 5-hour shift, she just told me not to lift anything. I hurt the whole time. I went to my doctor the next day and he said no lifting but that I could keep working. I worked 3 days and went back to the doctor who then said no working for 2 weeks. I’m still not working.

~ 16-year-old grocery store cashier

Bruises, Contusions, and Crushings by Body Part Affected

The large majority of “bruises, contusions, and crushings” to teens working in grocery stores were to the lower extremities (Figure 8). Of the 37 “bruises, contusions, and crushings,” information about the manner in which the injury was inflicted was available for 18 (49%). Twenty-four percent of the “bruises, contusions, and crushings” were the result of contact with objects.

Figure 8. Work-related Bruises, Contusions, and Crushings to Teens under Age 18 in Grocery Stores, by Body Part Affected, Massachusetts, 2000-2004 (n=37)



Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

I was ringing up groceries when my wrist started hurting. I told my supervisor who didn't believe me and told me to get back to work. The next day the pain was still there so I went to another supervisor above the previous supervisor who told me to go to the doctor. I have carpal tunnel syndrome in my wrist.

~ 17-year-old grocery store cashier

What Injured Teens Have to Say

Since the project's inception in 1993, *Teens at Work Project* staff have completed phone interviews with 94 young grocery store workers injured on-the-job. While the information from these interviews is not necessarily representative of all young grocery store workers who have been injured, it nevertheless provides some important insights.

Of these interviewed teens:

- Forty-six percent reported they had received no on-the-job training about how to work safely and avoid injury.
- Thirteen percent reported they had no work permits for their jobs at the time they were injured. **NOTE:** Massachusetts child labor laws require work permits which are obtained through the school district where the teen resides or attends school.
- As a result of their injuries, teens reported they could not perform their usual activities for an average of 26 days.
- Seventy-one percent believed their injuries were preventable.
- Nine percent reported that no supervisor or person responsible for supervising them was on the premises at the time of injury.

If you have any questions about the information presented here, or would like to learn more about the *Teens at Work Project*, contact Project Coordinator, Beatriz Pazos Vautin at 617-624-5677.

